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THE
ROCHESTER LAKE VIEW
WATER-CURE INSTITUTION

ROCHESTER, N.Y.

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THE
ROCHESTER LAKE VIEW
WATER-CURE INSTITUTION

A Facsimile of the 1851 Prospectus,
with an Introduction, published for
the 59th Annual Meeting of the
American Association for the History
of Medicine, April 30 - May 3, 1986.



ROCHESTER, N. Y.

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1986

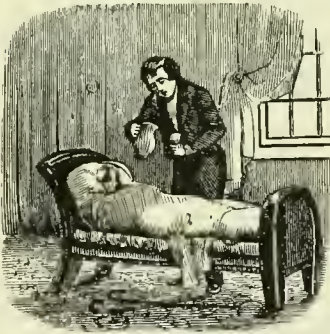
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INTRODUCTION

Among the many manifestations of the changing economic and social order in antebellum America was widespread distrust of the medical profession and its ability to manage disease effectively. Reacting against the "heroic" application of blisters, bleeding, cathartics, emetics, diuretics, diaphoretics, tonics and stimulants, a vocal and well-organized health reform movement emerged which sought to replace traditional passivity in the physician's presence with a new reliance on the healing powers of nature. Botanic medicine, homeopathy, Mesmerism, and hydropathy were among the movements which emerged in the first half of the century to provide alternatives to allopathic treatment.

Although the internal and external use of mineral waters had long been part of Western medical therapy, the water-cure phenomenon which captured public attention in the 1840s and 1850s stemmed from the work of Vincenz Priessnitz (1799-1851), the Silesian peasant-turned-hydrotherapist whose spa at Graefenberg emerged in the late 1820s as the mecca of the new hydropathic movement.



Its principles varied little as hydropathy spread from Graefenburg to England and finally to America in the mid-1840s. The water-cure patient ingested waters of varying mineral composition and therapeutic benefit, and found him- or herself wrapped in wet-sheet packs, standing beneath a douche, immersed in plunge baths, or soothed by sponge baths until the "crisis" occurred the

discharge of pathogenic poisons from the body through the pores of the skin which had been opened and flushed by the application of waters. There were foot baths and head baths, mouth baths and nose baths - baths into which, presumably, any part of the anatomy might be soaked or dipped.

Hydrotherapy was only part of the water-cure regimen, however. Patients were required to submit to a program of exercise therapy, strict diet, and enforced periods of rest. The use of alcohol, tobacco and stimulants such as coffee and tea were forbidden. Removed from the routine and anxieties of normal life, subject to a regimen of baths,

modest diet, exercise, and fresh air, the water-cure patient was likely to return home refreshed mentally and physically if not always freed of his symptoms.

Among the disorders most frequently mentioned as responding to hydropathy in water-cure literature and advertising were "female maladies." To attend to the physical and emotional needs of the increasing number of middle-class women attracted to hydropathic establishments, many water-cures maintained at least one female physician in their medical departments.

The presence of women physicians on water-cure medical staffs was just part of the role women played in the health reform movement at mid-century. They came from the ranks of allopaths and homeopaths, as well as from the newly formed hydropathic medical colleges. In fact, one-fifth of the professional hydropaths in the United States were women.¹ Hydropathic schools such as the American Hydropathic Institute² and the New York Hydropathic School³ graduated nearly as many female as male students each year. Many of those employed at water-cures - one of the few medical institutes where female physicians were actively sought - were also in the forefront of such allied movements as health reform, women's rights, temperance, and abolition.

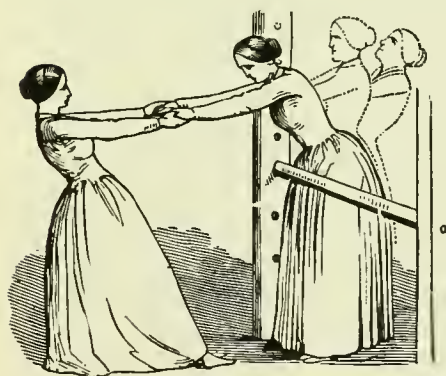
The water-cure movement in the United States grew rapidly and assumed cult proportions in the mid-1840s. By 1847 there were twenty-eight water-cures in the United States, nine of these in New York State. Between 1843 and 1900 213 water-cures opened (and closed) in the United States. Of these, sixty-four operated in New York (more than any other state)⁴, many within a hundred mile radius of the City of Rochester.

The Clifton Springs Water-Cure, founded in 1854 by Henry Foster, M.D.; the Avon Sulphur Springs, discovered in 1792 and a popular resort even before the advent of hydropathy; Jabez Greene's Castile Water-Cure, founded in 1849 and taken over by his daughter Cordelia Greene, M.D. in 1865 (one of many such father-daughter and husband-wife teams); and the Our Home Water-Cure, founded in Dansville in 1858 by health reform propagandist James C. Jackson, M.D., were just a few of the many hydropathic establishments which flourished in Western New York during the 19th century.

By 1851, at the height of the water-cure craze, the City of Rochester was the site of two water-cures. The earlier was founded by Hatfield Halsted, a "magnetic physician" and manufacturer of such commodities as "electric pills," "galvanized plasters," and several varieties of "magnetic ether." In 1844 Halsted purchased a large stone building at Buffalo and Genesee Streets (originally constructed as a cattle market),

which he converted into the Halsted Medical Institute. The facilities were enlarged seven years later and the hydropathic regimen expanded to include "motorpathy," a gymnastic system devised by Halsted which he described as "statuminating, vitalizing motion." In 1861 Halsted purchased the well-known Round Hill Water-Cure in Northampton, Mass. and closed his Rochester Institute after seventeen years of operation.⁵

Rochester's second hydropathic spa was the Lake View Water-Cure Institution, founded in 1851 by Capt. Pliny M. Bromley, a Rochester businessman and politician. Bromley bought a large house which had been built twenty years earlier on an elevated site two miles north of the city commanding an impressive view of Lake Ontario, Rochester, and the surrounding fields and orchards. A three-story addition was constructed which included sixty guest rooms, three large halls, facilities for gymnastics, twelve "elegant bathing rooms," and special facilities for douches, sitz baths, and other specialties of water-cure treatment. Water was supplied through cast-glass pipes leading from specially constructed brick and cement reservoirs. There were, however, no mineral springs on the property.



Movement to strengthen the back.

The institution was divided into male and female departments, the latter to be under the supervision of a "well educated female physician." As head of his medical department, Bromley hired Augustus P. Biegler, a Prussian-born homeopath who claimed to have known Hahnemann in Paris and to have had extensive German, French

and Scottish hospital experience. Biegler was practicing medicine at Albany in 1837 and is known to have been in Rochester by 1842. Not long after entering into an inharmonious second marriage with a local woman, Biegler was convicted of arson in the burning of a rented house and the loss of \$6,000 worth of insured personal property. Even so, Biegler chose to remain in Rochester where by 1847 he was again in

practice, prior to being engaged by Capt. Bromley as physician to the Lake View Water-Cure.⁶

Less than fifteen months after it opened, the Lake View Water-Cure Institution was advertised for sale. Local historians speculate that its failure may have been due to the proprietors' lack of water-cure experience, to Biegler's tarnished reputation, to competition from Halsted's water-cure several miles distant, and to the Lake View's suburban location.⁷ It is possible too that Bromley and Biegler were perceived more as opportunists than proponents of the health reform movement, and that those Rochesterians who could afford the time and expense of a water-cure treatment preferred other more reputable and fashionable spas whose rural locations were easily accessible on the state's expanding railway network.

In the spring of 1853 the Lake View was purchased by another Rochester homeopath, Lorenzo P. Fleming, who advertised it as an "equestrian and hydropathic" as well as a homeopathic institution. Dr. Fleming's plans for the Lake View soon ended, however, when fire destroyed Capt. Bromley's addition in July of the same year. His water-cure venture prematurely ended, Dr. Fleming resumed private practice and transferred his attentions to a new endeavor called the Rochester Air Bath Institute. Capt. Bromley returned to business and politics; and the unfortunate Dr. Biegler returned to medical practice until convicted of manslaughter in 1857 for an inept abortion. He died in prison the following year.⁸

Interestingly, both of Rochester's water-cures closed during the hey-day of the hydropathic movement in a geographic area noted for the number and reputation of its water-cures and spas. After 1865, however, the water-cure movement was in decline generally. Those establishments which did survive after 1865 - such as Clifton Springs, Avon Sulphur Springs, the Castile Water-Cure, and Our Home-on-the Hillside - became hygienic sanitariums and regular medical establishments. What remained of their water-cure orientation retained less of the spirit of the populist health movements of the 1840s and more of the hydrotherapeutics of such figures as Simon Baruch, John Harvey Kellogg and James King Crook.

Many factors contributed to the overall decline of hydropathy as a medical cult. From its very beginning hydropathy in this country had little formal contact with the regular medical profession, unlike its European counterpart. Nor did American medical schools think it necessary to provide training in an area perceived as a popular hygienic movement at best. Most American physicians at the end of the last century had little faith in the "pages of testimonials from renovated

statesmen, restored clergyman, and rejuvenated old ladies" abundant in the water-cure literature of the period.⁹ When in the last decades of the 19th century developments in the life sciences, the rise of medical specialties, and the emergence of the modern hospital altered the public's perception of the medical profession, hydropathy and related health reform cults were left behind.

If the rise of scientific medicine eroded public confidence in the medical efficacy of water-cures, their vogue as spas suffered from competition with other kinds of resorts - most notably those by the sea. Competition on both counts came from a more distant quarter. At mid-century, due to the time, inconvenience, and expense of European travel, most Americans in search of hydropathic treatment patronized the water-cures of their own country. By the end of the century, however, greater numbers of Americans were frequenting the spas of Europe, attracted not only by their often superior medical facilities but by their reputations as fashionable resorts. Henry Sigerist estimated that even as late as 1930, 100,000 Americans were being treated at European healthspas annually.¹⁰

The prospectus of the Lake View Water-Cure Institution reproduced here in facsimile is a now scarce example of a kind of literature which once flooded the country. Having to compete both as hydropathic establishments and as popular resorts, water-cures in the eastern states engaged in vigorous self-promotion which took the form of lecture tours by proprietors, advertisements in hydropathic journals, and brochures such as the one that follows.

Despite the volume of material printed, little of this promotional literature has survived. We at the Edward G. Miner Library of the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry take pleasure in offering this small facsimile as a memento of the 1986 meeting of the American Association for the History of Medicine and of an important phenomenon in the medical history of Western New York.

Christopher Hoolihan
History of Medicine Librarian

1. Numbers, R. "Do-it-yourself the sectarian way," IN: Medicine without doctors (ed. G.B. Risse), New York, Science History Publications, 1977, p. 64.
2. The first hydropathic medical college, founded in September 1851 by Thomas Nichols and his wife Mary Sargent Gove Nichols.
3. Founded in October 1853 by Russell T. Trall and chartered by the State of New York in 1857 as the New York Hygeio-Therapeutic College.
4. Weiss, H., and Kemble, H., The great American water-cure craze, Trenton, N.J., Past Times Press, 1967, p. 41.
5. Atwater, E., and Kohn, L., "Rochester and the water-cure," Rochester history, 32:7-12, 1970.
6. *ibid*, pp. 15-16
7. *ibid*, p. 19
8. *ibid*, p. 16
9. Crook, J., The mineral waters of the United States and their therapeutic use, New York, Lea Bros. & Co., 1899, p. 34.
10. Sigerist, H., "Rise and fall of the American spa," CIBA symposia, 8:326, 1946.

THE
ROCHESTER LAKE VIEW
Water-Cure Institution,

TWO MILES NORTH FROM THE CENTER OF THE CITY,

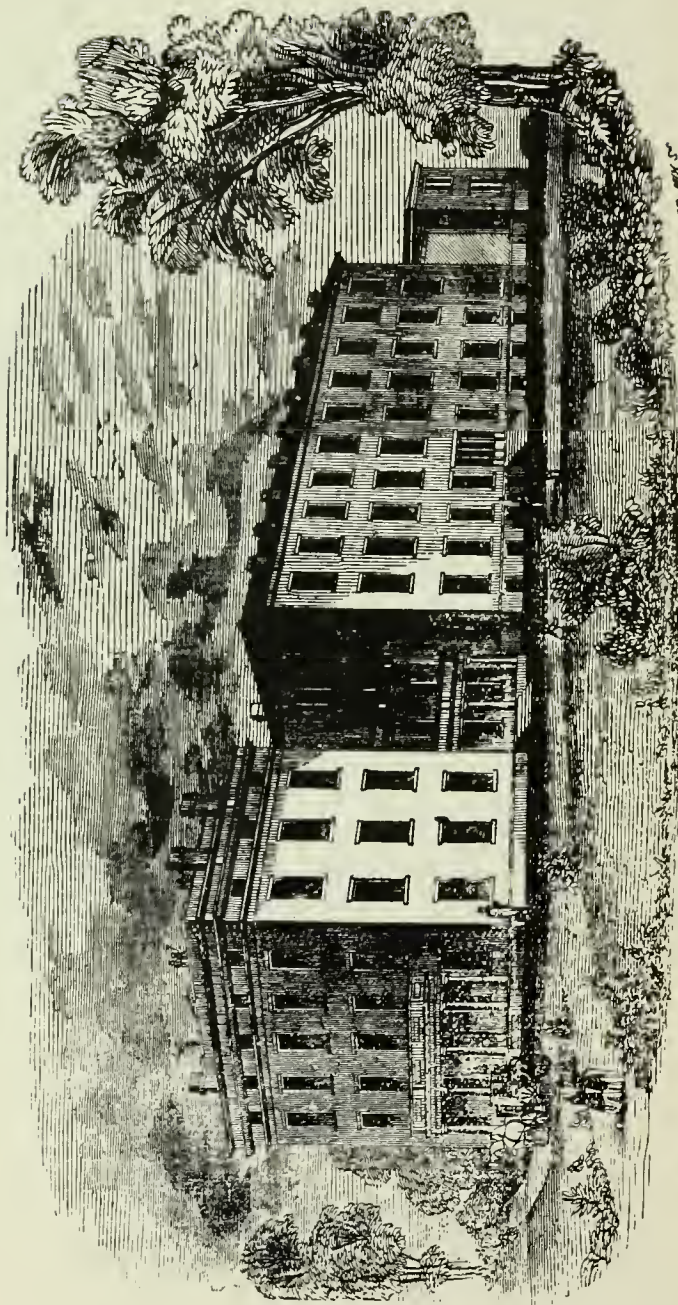
UNDER THE CARE OF

DR. A. P. BIEGLER,
PHYSICIAN.

CAPTAIN PLINY M. BROMLEY,
SUPERINTENDENT & PROPRIETOR.



ROCHESTER :
STEAM PRESS OF THE DAILY ADVERTISER.
1851.



WELLER BROS. & CO.

LAKE VIEW WATER CURE INSTITUTION.

DR. A. P. DIEGLER, Physician.

CAPT. P. M. BROMLEY, Prop'r.

ROCHESTER LAKE VIEW WATER CURE.

LOCATION AND SCENERY.

THIS Institution is located two miles north of the center of the city, not far from the Steamboat Landing, on the continuation of State street, towards Charlotte, on an eminence, where the country in all directions can be viewed for the distance of eight to ten miles. The city in the south, of which the greatest part, and all its prominent buildings can distinctly be seen. Lake Ontario in the north, four or five miles distant, can also be seen as far as our natural horizon will permit. In every direction the sight is unobstructed, and where the eye might pass, there are beautiful groves of forest trees, country seats, orchards and farms. The high banks of the Genesee River, with its two water-falls, only one and a half miles distant, are scenes of art and nature unsurpassed in the State of New York, and seldom to be found on this continent.

BUILDINGS & IMMEDIATE SCENERY.

The grounds and part of the buildings were formerly owned and occupied by FREEMAN CLARKE, Esq., as a residence. It is a double house, two stories, with a high basement, an attic, large wings, &c. There is no larger nor better finished house in the city or its vicinity. In addition to this there has been finished, a three-story building containing sixty rooms, three large halls, rooms for Gymnastics, twelve elegant Bathing-Rooms, and others for the various specific baths, such as Flowing Douche, Hose, Sitz, Throat, Rising Douche, Eye, Ear, Flowing Sitz, half and foot Baths, &c. The buildings are all of brick, finished, not only in the best workman-like manner, but

elegantly. The old and new Buildings, with Reservoirs, together with the furniture [all new], will cost over twenty-four thousand dollars; will accommodate *one hundred and twenty* Patients. The Reservoirs, Water-Works, Pipes of cast Glass, and the various Baths, will cost over two thousand dollars.

The buildings are surrounded by fine Walks, Alleys, Orchards; and a beautiful Park in front of the buildings has been laid out, and already planted with fine and costly trees, running from East to West surrounded by well-finished and gravelled Roads, nearly a quarter of a mile each way. This improved Park is in the center of thirty or forty building lots, each containing two acres of land; being owned by gentlemen, who have chosen this ground upon which to build private residences, because the location is so healthy and beautiful.

The Institution has been located at this elevated point, to secure three of the most absolute indispensable (elements) mediums for health and life; they are, light, air, and water, in their purity, free from valley and low country miasmata and mineral influences.



SANITARY ARRANGEMENTS.

The whole Establishment will be finished with all the improvements in modern architecture, designed for convenience, comfort and health of the patients. To be well adapted to the treatment in water-cure, the administration of Water as a Therapeutic agent, and its application in accordance with scientific principles.

The water will not be used indiscriminately and solely as has been the fashion in most of the Water-Cure Establishments; it will be used in connection with other approved treatment in the healing art.

Therapeutics or Medicinal Treatment will be strictly on Homœopathic principles.



GYMNASTICS.

Arrangements will be made for Gymnastic Exercises to suit the condition of every patient. A beautiful Bowling Alley, Billiard-Tables, carrying, drawing and pulling weights, with a great variety of other

exercises will be brought out, to cultivate the muscular power, to bring it to its height of perfection and strength, and at the same time amuse the patients.

DIVISION.

The Institution will be divided in male and female departments, the exercises and bathing are strictly private.

The Institution throughout, will be entrusted to the care of the experienced

AUGUSTUS P. BIEGLER, M. D.,

Who was educated in Prussia, Germany ; he has been a pupil of Hahnemann himself; a regular Visitor during nine months in nine of the best Hospitals in Paris, London, Greenwich, &c., and Visitor and Examiner of the Grafenburg Water-Cure in Germany, Practicing Physician in Albany and Rochester since 1835. In the first city, his success was eminent, for he had secured to himself the confidence of the first and most intelligent families of that city. His success in Rochester as a Physician has not been less marked. He enjoys the confidence of a very large and most respectable number of citizens, who employ him as their regular Physician. The Superintendent will be Captain Pliny M. Bromley, a gentleman of high character and most favorably known throughout the whole State. He resides at the Institution with his family, and is the Proprietor of the Establishment.

There will further be a well educated female Physician to assist in attending female diseases, and a sufficient number of well informed male and female nurses, as also other trustworthy attendance. Three gentlemen of high standing in their profession will act as counsel if medical counsel becomes necessary.

MEDICAL CARD.

DOCTOR A. P. BIEGLER, would respectfully announce to the citizens of Rochester, and the people throughout the State and Union, that he will be the attending Physician of the Lake View Water-Cure.

His many years experience in an extensive private practice, and particularly the opportunities he has had in German, French, English, and Scotch Hospital practice, will enable him to do justice to those who may have occasion to trust themselves under his care. It has been his aim to excell in every branch of the healing art if it were possible. Not contented with common success, he has labored day and night, years past, to be a fair and honorable competitor for a share of public favor, with his fellow practitioners of the old and new school, and he has succeeded far beyond his mark. Yet his success has not blinded him against the defects of the practical part of medical science; on the contrary, it has stimulated him to greater exertions particularly in those diseases where little or nothing of the profession could be expected; how far he has succeeded in his endeavors in his private practice, and what his success will be hereafter, under still greater responsibilities, is left for a generous public to determine.

Satisfied himself, that the most successful of human efforts have their limits, and that it is impossible for one mind to master the whole field of medical science; and hence he has matured a plan during the last ten years, by which the most difficult and obstinate *chronic* diseases will be treated on scientific principles with undoubted success. He has prepared himself with resources, for that unfortunate class of patients, who having exhausted all the skill of the different systems of medicine, and have no other alternative left, than either to go and die in a warmer climate in a foreign country, live on the nostrums of the day, or try the efficacy of mineral springs, and thereby drag out a miserable existence, when the majority of them absolutely are still curable, and the rest might enjoy comfortable health, in cases where there is no *organic lesion*. Diseases are: either organic lesions or functional; if organic [which is change of structure and destruction of parts] it cannot be cured, except by operation if the parts diseased and the nature of the case will admit of it, but if functional, it is still curable, although twenty doctors have passed sentence of death upon the unfortunate sufferer.

Patients suffering from any of the known diseases will be received at the Institution, but none will have more special attention than female diseases. They are in fact by far the greatest number, and by far the greatest sufferers of all the rest. They suffer from the virgin of 14 and 15, up to the matron of sixty and seventy, of diseases pecul-

lar to their constitution, but rarely are they cured in private practice even of the simplest female disease: hence the necessity for treatment as it will be carried out in the Lake-View Institution. The Physician pretends to say that few if any will leave the Institution dissatisfied, for none will be received without a critical examination, and only those will be retained, whose cases will admit either of a partial or perfect cure. The following is a partial enumeration of diseases which will be cured without much difficulty, viz: 'The various forms of Scrofula, Skin diseases, Salt-rheum, Erysipelas, Leprosy, nervous debility, Rheumatisms, Gout, Bronchitis, diseases of the lungs and heart, Rickets, Rachitis, Goiter Carcinom, Cancer, Ulceration and exfoliation of the bones, Dropsy, Epilepsy, Paralysis, or Palsy, diseases of the Eye, Scropholous Ophthalmia, Darkened Cornea, Ulceration of the Ear, Liver Complaints, Dyspepsia, Fever, Fever and Ague, all the various shades of fevers, weakness and derangement of the bowels, chronic catarrh in the head and lungs, mental prostration, Mania Monomenia, Hypochondria, Melancholy, Dementia or Insanity, Hysteria and all other diseases of the Uterus, such as Falling of the Womb Leucorrhoea Dismenorrhoea, Amenorrhoea, &c., &c.



TERMS,

Will be according to rooms taken and attention received.

For Board and treatment, \$10 per week; it may be more and will sometimes be less, according to circumstances.

For professional examination and advice to those who do not enter the Institution, a reasonable fee will be charged.

In coming here for treatment, Patients will provide themselves, with three comfortables, two woolen blankets, four sheets, (one linen) and linen for bandages.

All letters Post-paid and addressed to Doctor A. P. Biegler, 63 South-Fitzhugh Street, Rochester, Monroe Co., N. Y., or Captain Pliny M. Bromley, at the Institution.

REFERENCES.

Hon. Addison Gardner,
Rev. J. B. Shaw,
Everard Peck, President Commercial Bank,
Freeman Clark, " Rochester Bank,
Gen. Jacob Gould, " Farmers & Mechanics' Bank,
Edwin Scrantom, Esq.,
Chauncy Tucker, Esq.,
Hamlin Stilwell, Esq.,
Darius Perrin, Esq., Post Master.

Accession no.

Author title entry
Rochester Lake View
water-cure ...1986

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